

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants representative during the interview held September 16, 2010. In accordance with M.P.E.P § 713.04, Applicant's statement of substance of the personal interview is incorporated into the above amendments and following remarks.

Claims 1, 3-13 and 16 are pending in this application. Claims 4-5 and 8-13 are withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, Claims 1, 3 and 16 are amended; Claims 2, 14-15 and 17-18 are cancelled; and no claims are added herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding final Office Action, Claims 1-3 and 14-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,978,820 to Aoki in view of WO 2004/104357 to Chino, JP 7229377 to Mamoru, and U.S. Patent No. 5,775,814 to Agari; and Claims 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Aoki, Chino, Mamoru, Agari and further in view of JP 7173979 to Yukihiko.

With respect to the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) those rejections are respectfully traversed. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art does not teach or render obvious a net guide that connects a plurality of guiding elements having a pair of rising wall portions configured to follow faces of the net, at least one of the pair of rising wall portions has on an inner wall face thereof an inner rail concave groove and has on an outer wall face thereof an outer rail concave groove to form a series of guide rails formed by making the inner rail concave groove and outer rail concave groove serially in contact with each other between adjoining guiding elements, the concave grooves formed on each of the outer and inner faces of the rising wall portion are formed at locations having a different

height, such that the concave groove formed on the inner face of the rising wall portion is formed so as to be more adjacent to a tip end of the rising wall portion compared to the concave groove formed on the outer face of the rising wall portion, wherein the guide rail is provided with a net-holding member having a first engaging portion that engages with the inner rail concave groove, and a second engaging portion that engages with the outer rail concave groove of the guide rail, and wherein a thickness the first engaging portion in a rising direction of the rising wall portion is smaller than a width of the inner rail concave groove in the rising direction, and wherein a thickness of the second engaging portion in a rising direction of the rising wall portion is smaller than a width of the outer rail concave groove in the rising direction, as recited in Claim 1.

In contrast, Mamoru discusses a net holding member 20 includes an attachment part 21 to engage with the lower part of the net 2. A leg 22 projects from the substrate 23 and includes a piece 29 located in the groove 30. The groove 30 is provided with the slot frame part 4e which makes the C type with the guide wall 4b. As such, the groove 30 guides both ends of the piece 29 in an effort to stop the holding member 20 from rotating upwards but allowing the holding member 20 to move level with leg 22.

Agari discusses a linear motion rolling guide unit applied to a semiconductor manufacturing apparatus, a transfer apparatus, an industrial robot, an assembly robot and a machine tool, and having a slider slide relative to a track rail. In Agari, the linear motion rolling guide unit includes a track rail 2 having grooves 4 in both of its longitudinally extending side surfaces 3, and a slider 1 saddled on and capable of being moved relative to the track rail 2.

Aoki discusses a guide piece 14 formed in a net guide 12 that is U-shaped. The guide piece includes a bottom portion 14a extending along the lower edge of the net 4 and a stabilizing portion 14b extending upward along the outer periphery of the net 4. The guide

pieces 14 are connected with each other by inserting a tape member 16 through the insertion devices 14c, which are formed on the respective guide pieces 14, and the guide pieces 14 at both end of the net guide 12 are fixed to the tape member 16 with pins 18. The guide piece 14 is formed with abutting portions 14f formed of a surface facing the direction of connection of the guide piece 14 on both ends in the direction of connection at a position lower than the insertion device 14c for preventing the net guide 12 from bending.

Accordingly, the features of the claimed invention discussed above are not taught or rendered obvious by the teachings in the applied art. Moreover, the cited references do not recognize the advantageous results achieved by the present invention as discussed below, thus further demonstrating the non-obviousness of the present claims. In accordance with the present invention, Applicants have recognized a combination of features such that the serial contacting face of the guiding element that constitutes the net guide is in contact with each other, the net guide can be not only provided with a simple construction at lower cost, but also stably operated, while the capability of maintenance can be improved.

In addition, when the net guide is led out along the end portion of the net, the serial contacting face of each of the adjoining guiding elements is configured to be serially in contact with each other, and thereby the net is prevented from curving in a horizontal direction and the end portion of the aforementioned net can be always stably guided. In addition, since the net guide can be formed of a series of guide rails being serially in contact with each other between the adjoining guiding elements at the rising wall portion when the net guide is led out along the lower end portion of the net in a stretched condition, the holding member for the net can be movably disposed along the guide rail and the movement of the holding member along the guide rails can be smooth.

The features of the claimed invention are not taught in the applied art and therefore, the applied art cannot provide at least the advantages discussed above. Withdrawal of the rejection to the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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